

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of assisting in the diagnosis of cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both, that arises as a result of an infection in a patient, comprising, obtaining a sample of a body fluid from the patient, and determining a level of a brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) ~~or a fragment thereof, atrial natriuretic peptide (ANF) or a fragment thereof, or both BNP and atrial natriuretic peptide (ANF) and a fragment thereof and ANF or a fragment thereof,~~ within the sample of body fluid and comparing the level of BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF to the level of BNP, ANF, or both BNP and ANF from a control group, where an increase in the level of BNP, ANF, or both BNP and ANF in the sample, compared to the level of BNP, ANF, or both BNP and ANF in the control group, is an indicator of ~~a symptom of~~ cardiomyopathy, myocarditis or both cardiomyopathy and myocarditis that arises as a result of an infection in a patient.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining the concentration of BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF involves an assay comprising ~~one or more than at least~~ one antibody exhibiting affinity for the BNP, ANF, or both, ~~or a fragment thereof, one or more than one antibody exhibiting affinity for the ANF or a fragment thereof, or one or more than one antibody exhibiting affinity for both the BNP or a fragment thereof and the ANF or a fragment thereof.~~

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises plasma.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises urine.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises cerebrospinal fluid.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the infection comprises a viral infection, a rickettsial infection, a bacterial infection, a mycobacterial infection, a spirochetal infection, a fungal infection, or a parasitic infection.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the parasitic infection comprises *Trypanosoma cruzi*.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a polyclonal antibody, a monoclonal antibody, or a combination thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a polyclonal antibody.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a monoclonal antibody.

11 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein, ~~in the step of obtaining a sample of a body fluid from the patient, patient comprises obtaining two or more than two samples of body fluid from the patient~~ are obtained over a period of time at different points in time.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein, in the step of determining the level of BNP ~~or the level of BNP and ANF, or fragment thereof, ANF or a fragment thereof, or BNP and a fragment thereof and ANF or a fragment thereof,~~ the level of BNP or the level of BNP and ANF, ANF or both BNP and ANF is determined within each of the two or more than two samples of body fluid, and the level of BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF compared to determine a change in the BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF levels within the body fluid over time.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein a significant increase in the level of BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF is a predictor of cardiomyopathy or myocarditis.

14-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the assay is selected from the group consisting of RIA, ELISA, fluoroimmunoassay, immunofluorometric assay, and immunoradiometric assay.

21. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the patient is a human or a non-human animal.

22. (Withdrawn – Currently amended) A method of monitoring the effectiveness of a therapy for treating cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or an infection capable of causing cardiomyopathy or myocarditis in a patient, the method comprising;

i) obtaining two or more ~~than two~~ samples of a body fluid from the patient at different points in time over a period of time;

ii) determining the level of a brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) ~~or a fragment thereof, atrial natriuretic peptide (ANF), or a fragment thereof,~~ or both BNP ~~or a fragment thereof~~ and ANF ~~or a fragment thereof~~, within the two or more ~~than two~~ samples of body fluid;

wherein, a decrease in BNP, ANF ~~or both BNP and ANF~~ level in a sample taken at a later time point as compared to the BNP or both BNP and ANF level in a sample taken at an earlier time point indicates in the sample over the period time is an indicator of success of the treatment.

23. (Cancelled)